



Positioning open access in a transformative paradigm

5 December 2019

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The SPARC Africa logo, featuring a stylized orange 'S' with a map of Africa inside it.

UCT-SPARC Africa Open Access Symposium 2019
Open access and social justice driving African development

www.sparcafricasymp.uct.ac.za

Cape Town, South Africa

2 - 6 December
7 December - Planning meeting

sparcafrica sparcafrica SPARCAfrica

The logo of the University of Cape Town, featuring a shield with a book and an anchor, surrounded by the university's name in English, Afrikaans, and Xhosa.



Overview

- Introduction
- Contextualising critical theory
- Critical theory concepts - scholarly communication
 - Alienation
 - Labour exploitation
 - Power control and monopoly
 - Social exclusion and marginalisation
 - Empowerment and social justice
- Conclusion



Introduction

- University knowledge & research should transfer to goods and services for social justice goals
- Open access and social justice calls for the transformative worldview in the scholarly communication
- Commodification and alienation of knowledge as the norm (Pyati, 2007)
- Social justice driven open access models support African development
 - social justice concept
- Participation in the open access movement should be driven by unrestricted scholarly communication



Introduction Cont.

- Transformative worldview interrogates dominant social structures that marginalise humanity
 - alienation, power control, exploitation, etc. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)
- Transformative paradigm theories include *inter alia*, critical theory, feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018)
- Transformative theoretical lenses are the basis on which social justice service is built
- **Critical theory** lens is “inclusive of gender, sexuality and race; and emphasises on human emancipation and social inclusion”(Held, 1980)



Contextualising critical theory

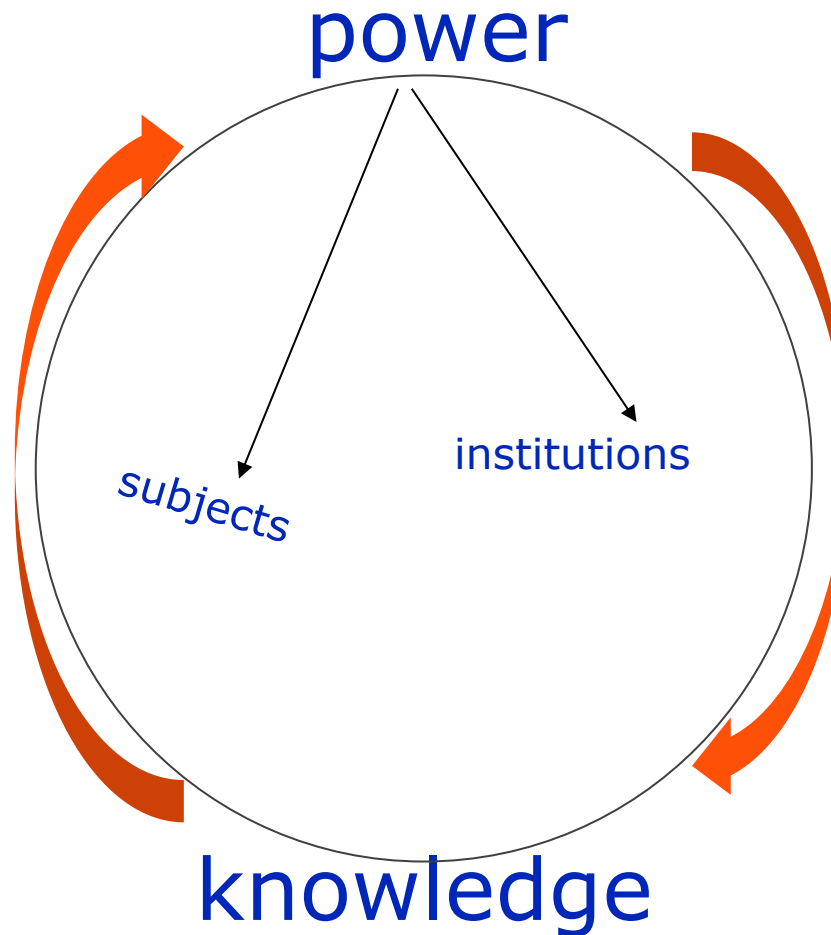


- Traditional scholarly publishing is a dominant system – commodification of knowledge (Pyati, 2007)
- Global capitalism on the information industry violates rights to information and to education
- Obstruction of knowledge transfer to industries thus affecting production and service provision
 - effects on the economy, improvement of primary health and other services
- Commodification and control of knowledge flow (copyright restrictions) impact education sector
 - unaffordable cost of textbooks affecting higher education (Mishra, 2019)





Contextualising critical theory





Critical theory concepts & scholarly communication



- Alienation
- Labour exploitation
- Power control and monopoly
- Social exclusion and marginalisation
- Empowerment and social justice





Alienation

- Alienation concept explains labour in the capitalist society (Crossely, 2005)
- Labour has much wider context than paid labour
 - labour is a practice through which humans transform their world
- Alienation is utilised to achieve total control as powerful stakeholders control individuals' products of labour
- Traditional scholarly communication publishing alienates intellectual property
 - copyright, subscriptions & APCs



Alienation and conformation



- Publishing behaviour in the industry promotes conformism
- Research impact evolution is driven by metrics like high impact factor (Cochrane et al., 2018)
 - focusing on prestige (individualism)
 - promotion and tenure is linked to metrics from commercial databases
 - research impact on society is not a priority
- Culture of research publishing and evaluation forces content creators to conform to alienation of knowledge
- Who benefits? - capitalists





Labour exploitation

- Funders and universities - tax payers – fund research
- Submission of manuscripts to journals is followed by **voluntary** peer-review (Raju et al., 2016)
- Copy-editing could be outsourced for a fee
- The cost of the final output is not affordable
 - university libraries cancel journals yearly
 - licenses for knowledge use restrict users
 - knowledge transfer into policy development, goods, services will not be achieved



Power control and monopoly



- Author contracts require signing away of copyright prior to content publishing
- Publishers/journals hold copyright and terms of use depend on copyright holder
- Publishers of books and textbooks follow a similar system
 - prohibit redistribution and re-use
 - prohibit derivatives and sharing – OERs and open textbooks
- Copyright transfer bestows power in publishers & promotes monopoly





Social exclusion & marginalisation



- Purpose of research is to uplift the society
- Knowledge is a critical tool in developing an information economy - inclusivity
- Commodification of content has adverse effects as they exclude creators of content
- Lack of access to knowledge excludes individuals or groups in diverse activities
- Social exclusion exacerbates marginalisation thus strengthens colonial social classes
 - income gaps, gender salary imbalances





Empowerment and social justice



- Open access movement emerged to democratise the scholarly communication industry and some of its objectives include:
 - disrupting the subscription model
 - open licensing of knowledge to share knowledge – equal access – equity
- Open publishing of knowledge with open (creative commons) licenses promote sharing of content and re-use
- Access to open licensed knowledge permit further creation of content





Empowerment and social justice



- Users freely access knowledge that can fast track development through:
 - health service provision
 - economic projects, critical for low-income communities
 - agricultural projects at grass routes level as small scale farming is critical for food security
 - educational development in diverse sectors
- These activities empower humanity and thus driving social justices goals



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



1
INTEGRATED
AFRICA

2
PROSPEROUS
AFRICA

3
DEMOCRATIC
AFRICA

4
PEACEFUL
AFRICA

5
STRONG
CULTURAL IDENTITY

6
PEOPLE DRIVEN
CONTINENT

7
INTERNATIONAL
DYNAMIC FORCE





Conclusion

- Research is meant to support development and should be driven by social justice
- Publishing in proprietary journals alienates knowledge and hinders human progress
- Commodification of knowledge further marginalises low income communities and historically disadvantaged groups
- Open access should be the default and is only complete when equitable access to knowledge and participation in knowledge creation is attained

Writers - Teachers - Librarians Go on Being Dangerous



"The first people a dictator puts in jail after a coup are the writers, the teachers, the librarians — because these people are dangerous. They have enough vocabulary to recognize injustice and to speak out loudly about it. Let us have the courage to go on being dangerous people." ~ Madeleine L'Engle



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